

remind us of our sorrow at the death of Yitzhak Rabin and the loss of so many innocents to the evil of terrorism. But as this harsh winter ends, we remember as well that God still lights our path and that, with courage and hope, the best in human nature will still prevail.

Hillary and I extend warm wishes for a memorable Passover.

**Bill Clinton**

**Remarks Following a Memorial Service for Secretary of Commerce Ronald H. Brown**

*April 4, 1996*

Ladies and gentlemen, we just had a very moving memorial service not only to grieve but to celebrate the life of Secretary Brown and the other employees of the National Government, our military people, and the business leaders who were on that mission. We thanked God for their lives, we prayed for their families, and we came together in our grief and rededication. And we pointed out that it was 28 years ago on this day that Martin Luther King was killed in Memphis, working for what he believed in.

Today I spoke with the parents of one of the young women who died who worked for the Department of Commerce, who said they had spent their careers as school teachers, raising their daughter to believe that she could make a difference and that she ought to try. And they were very proud that she died doing what she believed in, trying to aid the peace in Bosnia.

And so that is how we are trying to think about this very difficult thing on this beautiful spring day in Easter Week.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:15 p.m. outside St. Johns Church on Lafayette Park.

**Proclamation 6878—Death of Those Aboard U.S. Air Force Aircraft in Croatia**

*April 4, 1996*

*By the President of the United States of America*

**A Proclamation**

As a mark of respect for Secretary Ronald H. Brown and all those killed in the April 3, 1996, crash of the U.S. Air Force aircraft in Croatia, I hereby order, by the authority vested in me as President of the United States of America by section 175 of title 36 of the United States Code, that the flag of the United States shall be flown at half-staff at the White House and upon all public buildings and grounds, at all military posts and naval stations, and on all naval vessels of the Federal Government in the District of Columbia and throughout the United States and its Territories and possessions through Wednesday, April 10, 1996. I also direct that the flag shall be flown at half-staff for the same length of time at all United States embassies, legations, consular offices, and other facilities abroad, including all military facilities and naval vessels and stations.

**In Witness Whereof**, I have hereunto set my hand this fourth day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twentieth.

**William J. Clinton**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., April 5, 1996]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on April 8.

**Message on the Observance of Easter, 1996**

*April 4, 1996*

Warm greetings to everyone celebrating Easter.

Across America and around the world, Christians gather on Easter Sunday to commemorate the central event in the history of their salvation: the Resurrection of Jesus. This holy day marks that moment in time when good conquered evil, hope overcame despair, and life triumphed over death. Just as spring brings warmth and beauty to the earth after a harsh winter, Easter brings joy and new life to the spirit, reminding us that no mistake or failing of the past can put us beyond the reach of God's mercy.

In this age of great challenge and even greater possibility, Easter's timeless message strengthens us for the tasks before us. As we celebrate in churches and cathedrals, at sunrise services and in family gatherings, we remember that our lives have great purpose and value. We recognize that the life and words of Jesus call us to works of caring and compassion, to giving more than receiving. His death and resurrection are powerful reminders of how God's grace is still at work in the world in which we live today.

Hillary joins me in extending best wishes to all for a wonderful Easter celebration.

**Bill Clinton**

### **Statement on Signing the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996**

*April 4, 1996*

I am today signing into law H.R. 2854, the "Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996." H.R. 2854 would authorize most agriculture programs for fiscal years 1996–2002, including commodities, credit, conservation, rural development, trade, and nutrition.

I am signing H.R. 2854 with reservation because I believe the bill fails to provide an adequate safety net for family farmers. The fixed payments in the bill do not adjust to changes in market conditions, which would leave farmers, and the rural communities in which they live, vulnerable to reductions in crop prices or yields. I am firmly committed to submitting legislation and working with the Congress next year to strengthen the farm safety net.

I am, however, keenly aware that farm legislation is long overdue and American farmers need to know now the conditions under which they are operating. In addition, the bill includes a considerable number of my Administration's proposals. I believe these authorities will enhance our environmental and economic development goals. They will form a lasting legacy of the 1996 farm bill.

The hallmark of the bill's commodity title is the planting flexibility provisions. At long last, farmers will be free to plant for the market, not for government programs. The expansion of planting flexibility will improve U.S. competitiveness in world markets. In addition, this legislation will reduce the adverse environmental effects of production agriculture and greatly simplify farm programs.

I am very pleased with the rural development title of the bill. The Congress has incorporated the Administration's principle that we must continue our investment in traditional infrastructure while expanding the investment in information infrastructure and in human capital. These investments will ensure that all Americans, regardless of how remote an area they live in, will have the opportunity to better their lives and share in the economic growth spurred by the revolution in information technology.

My Administration is keenly aware that there is no "one size fits all" Washington solution to local economic development needs. That is why we proposed the Rural Performance Partnership Initiative, which provides flexibility to States to tailor Federal program funds to their unique situation. I salute the Congress for enacting this proposal, as well as providing \$300 million in additional resources for rural development and agricultural research through the "Fund for Rural America."

I also wholeheartedly endorse the bill's conservation provisions. The bill will enhance contributions to environmental quality and farm income from the Conservation Reserve Program, a program whose importance I have repeatedly stressed. This bill provides more than \$1 billion over 7 years for on-farm conservation measures, including assistance for livestock producers, which will help prevent soil erosion and clear our streams and air. I am also glad to see that farmers will